



December 15, 2006

Fourth defendant is sentenced for extortion in an assault on a West Warwick businessman

A federal judge in Providence today sentenced **Quoc Nguyen**, of Watertown, Massachusetts, to 46 months in prison for his role in the extortion of a West Warwick businessman over a purported gambling debt. Three codefendants were previously sentenced in the extortion, in which the businessman was assaulted in an attempt to collect \$5,200.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the sentence, which Senior U.S. District Court Judge Ernest C. Torres imposed in U.S. District Court, Providence.

Last month, Judge Torres sentenced **Khong Nguyen**, of Watertown, to 46 months in prison, **Van Anh**, of Quincy, to 52 months, and **Thinh Cao**, also of Quincy, to 150 months. Cao, who has prior convictions in Massachusetts and New Jersey for armed robbery and drug trafficking, was sentenced as a career offender.

Federal juries in May and June convicted the four men in the extortion. Quoc Nguyen was tried separately from the other three defendants.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sandra R. Beckner, and James H. Leavey, and First Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth P. Madden prosecuted the cases. During the two trials, they presented evidence that, in early 2005, a West Warwick businessman lost \$12,000 betting on basketball games – \$6,800 for himself and \$5,200 that he said was on behalf of a friend.

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A few weeks after the bets were placed, Anh, Khong Nguyen, and a third individual visited the businessman at his shop and demanded that he pay the \$12,000. The gambler subsequently paid Anh \$6,800 for the bets that he claimed were his.

On July 25, 2005, the Nguyens, who are brothers, and Cao went to the man's shop, demanded that he pay the remaining \$5,200 of the debt, and put him in touch with Anh by cell phone. After the victim told Anh that he wouldn't pay, Khong and Quoc Nguyen beat him; Cao directed the assault. The victim suffered minor injuries and, with the help of an associate, managed to flee. After an associate of the victim contacted West Warwick Police, Cao and the Nguyens fled in their motor vehicle. Massachusetts State Police stopped the vehicle carrying the three men, and they returned to Rhode Island.

The FBI joined the investigation and, in December 2005, a federal grand jury returned a two-count indictment charging the four men with conspiring to use extortionate means to collect a debt and with using extortionate means to collect a debt.

Anh, Khong Nguyen, and Cao were found guilty of both charges. Quoc Nguyen was found guilty of extortion but not guilty of conspiracy.

The FBI, West Warwick Police, and the Massachusetts State Police investigated the case.

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